Tsleil-Waututh Nation lend support to Wet'suwet'en

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Byline: Brent Richter, North Shore News

Body

The Tsleil-Waututh Nation's Sacred Trust Initiative is showing their firm support for Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs' struggle to halt the Coastal Gas Link pipeline from coming through their territory. Since the start of August, hereditary chiefs from the Wet'suwet'en have been visiting Indigenous communities and cities across the country as part of their Strengthening Our Sovereignty Tour.

They were in downtown Vancouver Monday, at CBC Plaza, and were officially welcomed by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation's Sacred Trust Initiative. Tsleil-Waututh leaders who spoke at the rally outside the CBC office made clear that Wet'suwet'en's struggle against a pipeline is also their own struggle.

The Tsleil-Waututh and their Sacred Trust Initiative have been steadfastly opposed to expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline. "The Wet'suwet'en have been under attack. Their land has been under attack. Their waters have been under attack. I've been there. I've had the honour to swim in your rivers, and drink right out from the river and I know what you are protecting. And I know why," said Charlene Aleck, a three-time elected member of Tsleil-Waututh Nation council.

"What you know to be good and true in life is being punished by the federal government, by these industries. And there has to come a time where we realize enough is enough." Rueben George, spokesperson for the Sacred Trust Initiative, said the Wet'suwet'en's fight to protect their territory is part of the larger fight in the climate crisis. Everyone's desire to protect the Earth should come as naturally as a parent's love for their newborn child, George said.

"When they're born and they're a baby and [you] hold them and love them, you create a reciprocal relationship with spirit between yourself and the baby. That's how we think with the water, with the land, with the air," he said. "And we don't have to do big studies to figure things out. Look at the floods. Look at the fires." George reiterated that despite the federal government's approvals in place and construction underway, the TMX pipeline will never be completed. Hereditary Chief Namoks (John Ridsdale) drew attention to the violence his land defenders have faced from the RCMP in the name of forcing the Coastal Gas Link pipeline through, but also expressed hope and resolve in light of the crowd of supporters who'd come to listen.

"When they come at us with such violence, it proves to us how weak they are. Bullies really do not like it when you stand up to them. And that's what industry and the elected governments are at this point in history," he said. "We're changing history and for the better."

Graphic

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Brent Richter , Nsn; Rueben George addresses supporters at a rally in support of the struggle ofWet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs against the Coastal Gas Link pipeline,Monday.;

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